

*Incorporated
July 11th
1885*

HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN
HOME FOR AGED COUPLES
AND AGED SINGLE MEN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

*FROM FEBRUARY, 1885
TO JANUARY, 1903*



LOCATED IN PHILADELPHIA
....AT BALA STATION....
ON PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD

Officers from 1885 to 1899

MRS. C. E. RONEY, President
Bala

MRS. A. W. LYMAN, Secretary
464 North 7th Street

MRS. ROBERT DORNAN, Treasurer
1505 North 16th Street



Present Officers

MRS. ROBERT DORNAN, President
1505 North 16th Street

MRS. ROBERT H. HINCKLEY, Secretary
127 North 19th Street

MRS. CHAS. J. THOMSON, Treasurer
2017 North 15th Street

History of the Presbyterian Home for Aged Couples and Aged Single Men of Pennsylvania.

BY MRS. A. W. LYMAN.

Seventeen years ago it was asked of Presbyterians, "What shall be done with our aged couples who are without means of support and incapacitated for labor?" "Would you separate these aged ones?" If so, "Where will you find an institution willing to take either if their companion be living?" A man incapacitated for labor by reason of general debility, offered his means to any Presbyterian Home willing to care for him; but there was no such Home in existence. Then an aged member of Olivet church (almost blind), could find no home to give him admittance, because his wife was living; yet that wife was an inmate of the Norristown Insane Asylum.

The query then arose: Why should not the Presbyterian Church (so strong in members, so rich in means, so systematic and efficient in work, and so liberal in charities), assume the care of aged indigent couples and aged single men of their own household of faith? With these thoughts in view, the late Mrs. J. K. Wallace, with unwearied zeal, and a faith that never wavered, amidst difficulties and discouragements, succeeded in bringing together about a dozen ladies, representing different Presbyterian churches, pledged to take up the work. The first meeting was held on February 19, 1885. The late Rev. John Patton, D. D., presided. Rev. Mr. Harlow acted as Secretary. The late Rev. Dr. Harper led in prayer; Rev. L. Y. Graham, D. D. (with

others), spoke encouragingly of the work. At this meeting the three first officers were elected :

Mrs. C. E. Roney of Tabernacle church, president.

Mrs. A. W. Lyman of First Presbyterian church, N. L., secretary.

Mrs. Robert Dornan of Temple church, treasurer.

These officers are still actively engaged in the work.

April 7 the matter was placed before Presbytery by Rev. Dr. L. Y. Graham, and later a copy of resolutions, approving of the work, was forwarded to the managers, in which said Presbytery commended the institution to the sympathy and support of their churches within its bounds. The managers, now numbering twenty ladies, applied for a charter, which was later received, and the Home was incorporated July 11, 1885.

Meanwhile the ladies had selected a dwelling house at Sixty-fifth and Vine streets, paying thereon \$100 and pledging the balance of the first payment of \$1,500 at a certified time : but on June 11 there was only \$843 in the treasury. An extension of time having been denied them, the managers turned to that source where help is never denied, where a promise is never broken. "Ask and it shall be given you," saith our Lord. All knelt in prayer, led by the president in these words : "Father, if this work meet not thy approval, hedge the way about us that we cannot go forward ; if it be of thine own planting, send us the means to carry on the work." One of the managers coming in at this time, presented a check for \$500—a donation from Mrs. Mathew Baird, member of a Presbyterian church. Was not that divine approbation? Did he not set the seal of his approval on this work? Yea, verily, God is in our work, and our hope is in God, and hope is ever more secure, energy more constant, when founded on the belief that all is under Almighty guidance.

The first inmates were admitted to the Home in June, 1885. After two years had passed, it was found necessary to enlarge the building. This was done by purchasing the adjoining property ; not as the best method of work, but as the only available method at that time. This property was later disposed of to a committee establishing a " Home for Aged Soldiers and Their Wives."

It now became apparent that there must be a building erected, adequate to the needs of, and suitable to represent, the great Presbyterian Church, including all branches of United and Reformed Presbyterians. Faith, devotion and courage are the essential factors of any great undertaking, a fact standing out conspicuously in the year 1892, when the managers, at a cost of \$20,000, purchased four acres of land at Bala, on the Schuylkill Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad, on the western border of Fairmount Park, about five or six miles from Broad Street Station.

After consultation with the Board of Advisors \$40,000 was borrowed, and a contract entered into for a good stone building at a cost of \$52,000. Ground for this structure was broken on May 8, 1893, and on June 16 following the corner stone was laid, with impressive ceremonies, in the presence of a vast assembly of interested spectators ; and before the year closed, the building stood completed ; a handsome commodious structure ; a Home in reality for convenience and comfort ; a living monument to the philanthropy of the Presbyterian Church, including United and Reformed Presbyterians of Pennsylvania.

Its design is in a simple domestic style ; it stands on the south side of City Avenue, within the limits of Philadelphia, about two squares from the Pennsylvania Railroad station at Bala. The public are invited to visit it on any day (Sunday excepted), talk with the aged ones, and interest themselves in their welfare. The

rooms are large and have been beautifully furnished, either by churches or by individuals, without any expense to the treasury.

During the year 1896, through the generosity of the late Mr. John Hope we were enabled to finish the east wing of the building, now known as the John and Martha Hope memorial wing. Later another wing was added, having single rooms for men. This was built by Miss Elizabeth Anderson, in memory of her brother, and is called the John Anderson memorial wing.

The Home is under the care of about ninety managers from the different churches. There are fourteen gentlemen forming an Advisory Board, to whom the managers apply for counsel on any vexed question or knotty problem to be disentangled. It has also about fifty young lady helpers, a band of careful workers, called "The Young Ladies' Auxiliary." These visit and entertain the aged ones, keeping them in touch with the world and its social happenings. This is indeed the true spirit of service, and is independent of their money-getting and money-spending for the needs of the Home and its family.

With gratitude to our Heavenly Father we review the record of the past history of the Home, and look back with a strange feeling of awe upon that memorable day, almost eighteen years ago, whilst on our knees calling upon the Lord for help, there came a direct answer in a check for the amount needed. From that day until the present there has not been a pressing need that has not, in good time, been supplied. "Step by step" has been our motto : like a chain, each year a link, so that with the incoming new year, we hope to be able to cancel all indebtedness on the building.

Whilst the present is a time for rejoicing, we dare not fold our hands in idleness ; there is no "Castle of Indolence" in sight. An imperative need is before us. We must have a new

wing with single rooms for the women who have been bereft of their companions while in our care. A chapel is also a great necessity ; it should be built on the grounds of the institution. There is no Presbyterian church at Bala. Who will come to our aid in this matter? Surely there is enough Christian philanthropy to carry the tide to its uttermost. We leave you Paul's injunction to the Philippians :

“HELP THESE WOMEN.”



Giving Twice Blessed.

BY MRS. JOHN PEACOCK.

It is mutually a privilege and a duty of Christians to care for Christ's people and to be cared for by them. While Christ says it is more blessed to give than to receive, we are apt to feel that it is more blessed to receive than to give. We count as our blessings what we receive, while Jesus says our greater blessings are what we give.

Jesus wishes his people to be like himself. He asks them to follow his example. He divinely fits all Christian work to the various relations and circumstances of life. The same deed or work or gift may help two of his people into his likeness. The giver and receiver both have an opportunity to be Christ-like. The giver may give in the spirit of the Master and the receiver may receive in the spirit of the Master. Knowing who Jesus is, we do not wonder that Jesus should give like God. But knowing who he is, he may well be called Wonderful that he should be willing to receive, like one in need. Did the women of Galilee minister to him of their substance? Did he need to receive from a fish the money to pay his temple tribute? Did he need to receive hospitality in the home of Lazarus? Did he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, not have of his own where to lay his head? Did the Lord of Glory so identify himself with his people both here in his humiliation and also on the great white throne, as to acknowledge anything done for them as though done to himself in

person? Great must have been his need sometimes, since he was tried in this point as extremely as any one is.

And with what a spirit did Jesus so receive and thus give an example for his people so to receive. What grace is needed in needy human beings to receive as gracefully as Jesus did in his need! So may those in the home receive for his sake, who is putting into the hearts of others of his people to give in the same Spirit for his sake. What a happy home it will be when all receive as the Master did in his day from those that ministered to his wants. And how happy will be those who are thus ministering to the wants of the home to have their Christly ministries received as Jesus would have received them.

But there is another side of these labors and gifts of love. The supply of the temporary or temporal wants of the Home is not the chief concern. The Master could easily open his hand and supply the wants of every one in it, as he did in the wilderness. But where then would be the opportunity for the loving ministry of the friends of the Home whom the Master would develop into his own Spirit? It needed little or no love for the disciples to receive directly from the hand of the Master the multiplying bread and fishes to feed five thousand in the wilderness. But it would have needed much more, without the presence and command of the Master, to have shared their last loaf or fish with the hungry around them. But it would have needed immensely more still to have done this in the very spirit of the Master. For he even gave himself to supply the extreme need of humanity, the need of a perfect obedience and of an atoning sacrifice. But willingly, cheerfully did he so minister to the needs of a perishing world. And it is this spirit that we would cultivate in those who originated and carry on the Home at Bala and all similar institutions. This is the great motive

and reward to encourage all such self-denying labors. The Providential need of this Home for the family of the household of faith is an opportunity to cultivate this Christ-like spirit.

This work should be carried on for the Master's sake, as well as for those who are the recipients of its benefits. However much or little it may at times be appreciated, it would not be possible for it to be so little appreciated as was the Master's work in his day. But he did it. He saw in men the image of his Father. He saw what he could do for them, and with them. Though it cost him the death of the cross, he gave himself to supply the last supreme need of humanity. And he did it for the joy of so great salvation.

One may be as needy as Lazarus at the rich man's gate, yet he may be the representative of the Master. Here is an opportunity to do him good, and to be like Jesus in the doing of it.

There is something that appeals closely to the sympathetic heart in the purpose of The Home for Aged Couples and Single Men. Before it was established, an aged man, a member of our beloved Presbyterian Church, was an inmate of a neighboring Home. But this Home did not admit couples. His wife was in a Home in Indiana. Friends would have given all that was needed to enable them to spend their last days together. But there was no Home in our Church that would receive them both. Each of them died, homesick for the other, before the way was clear to have them admitted into a Home together. Besides there was no Home in our Church for aged men who are alone in the world. In providing for these in addition to aged couples, the Home at Bala rounded out the benevolent circle of institutions of our Church for all classes; the sick in the hospital, widows and single men. What a circle of opportunity for caring for those for whom Christ cares, for cultivating the same mind that was in Christ, and for lay-

ing up treasure in Heaven. Every one can have a share in the Master's administration, as large as each will, by laboring as the managers do, by giving as contributors do, by bequests as some now in glory have already done. The work will go on and on to the end, for the Master assures us that we shall have the poor with us alway. Thus there will always be the opportunity, as there will always be the need of developing and manifesting the Spirit of Christ. What a glorious reward for a little work it will be to hear from his lips: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."



The Presbyterian Home for Aged Couples and Aged Men Financially Considered.

BY MRS. ROBERT H. HINCKLEY.

The word finance means, revenue ; funds in the treasury, or accruing to it ; resources of money. It would be difficult, therefore, to consider the Home for Aged Couples, when it was organized, from a financial standpoint, as there was no money in hand, and no resources of money ; the first dollar being contributed by Mrs. J. K. Wallace.

In May of 1885 a house was purchased at the corner of Sixty-fifth and Vine Streets, at a cost of \$8,000, the \$100 paid to seal this contract being the gift of the late George W. Childs, Esq., At the end of the first year we had paid \$2,500 on the property and had \$250 subscribed towards a building fund.

At the end of the second year we found every room in our building occupied, and two aged couples awaiting admission ; this necessitated the purchase of the adjoining property, at a cost of \$6,100 and \$797.15 additional for merging the two buildings.

The fourth year we were enabled to pay the balance on the second property, which, with interest, amounted to \$1,159 58 and at the same time a necessity arose for a more commodious building in the near future. December 31, 1891, our balance in the building fund was \$3,121.27, exclusive of \$5,500 invested in bonds at five per cent , the amount of mortgage on property then occupied at Sixty-fifth and Vine.

In May, 1892, ground was purchased at Bala, at a cost of

\$20,000, on which it was proposed to erect a good stone building. This year the building fund reached the sum of \$14,365.57, from which \$10,000 was paid on the newly purchased ground at Bala.

The dwelling at Sixty-fifth and Vine streets having become entirely inadequate for the comfort of the family, after consultation with the Board of Advisors, the managers concluded to build at once ; and a contract was made for a substantial stone building, at a cost of \$52,000. Forty thousand dollars were then borrowed wherewith to commence work ; and ground was broken on Monday, May 8, 1893

During our ninth year we sold our property at Sixty-fifth and Vine Streets and also paid \$27,366.40 on our new building at Bala, leaving an indebtedness to architect and builder of about \$18,000, beside the \$40,000 borrowed to commence the work, making our debt \$58,000.

In 1896 it was found necessary to complete the new wing at a cost of \$3,300. During this year \$4,278 was paid on account of second mortgage. In 1899 the second mortgage had been reduced to \$2,000, the first mortgage still being \$40,000. The cost of the whole building, including the ground, was about \$100,000

In 1900 the second mortgage was entirely paid and also \$10,000 on account of first mortgage. During this year we also had a gift of \$10,000 for the erection of another wing. In 1901 a donation of \$5,000 from Mr. W. J. McCahan of Princeton church, reduced our mortgage to \$25,000. The cost of the new wing when completed was \$15,144.80, which was entirely paid, and many needed repairs made.

Now, after eighteen years of struggle and labor at the end of 1902, December twenty-seventh the last payment on account of mortgage was made ; in gratitude for which a praise service was

held in the auditorium of the Witherspoon Building on Monday, December 29, at 2.30 p. m.

While we are rejoicing to be free from debt, at the same time we have no endowment, and the cost of maintenance is about \$10,000 per annum. We are also badly in need of a chapel, there being no Presbyterian church at Bala, and our sitting room, in which service is held each Sabbath afternoon, is all too small. New rooms for inmates are needed, as our last monthly report showed every room occupied.

Some may ask if it was necessary to spend all this money in buildings? In answer we would say, that from the commencement of the Home to the present time we have cared for forty men and forty-eight couples, ranging in age from sixty-five to ninety-five years, all of whom were from the State of Pennsylvania and were in good standing in their respective churches, some of them having been elders, one a minister, and one the father of a minister. So we ask for the continued and increased support for these aged ones that we may be enabled to meet each opportunity as it offers.

